



News Release

For Immediate Release:

Thursday, May, 15, 2008

Media Contact:

Travis Scoresby

Assistant Training Coordinator

(o) 801-538-9133 (m) 801-440-7203

UDOH Supports Life-saving Emergency Injection Law

New rule allows students to carry epi-pens for anaphylactic shock in school

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) Bureau of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) applauds the recent passage of House Bill 101, a measure that could save children's lives. The 'Emergency Injection for Anaphylactic Reaction Act' will allow students with food allergies to inject themselves with epinephrine during an allergic reaction that threatens to close off the throat and airway.

“One of the biggest fears as a parent of a child with life-threatening food allergies is sending them to school,” said Michelle Fogg, founder of the Utah Food Allergy Network (UFAN). “There are so many stories from UFAN parents who are frustrated and in fear every day because their child's school will only store their epinephrine auto-injector in a locked cabinet or office.”

Fogg says that it wastes precious time because others may not be able to get to the injector in time to save a child's life in an emergency. In one actual case, the child's school kept the injector in a locked cabinet and the only person who had access to it was on vacation. And no one in the school had any knowledge of the auto-injector.

A recent study reported that 25 percent of all food allergy reactions in one two-year period occurred at school (*Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*, Nowak-Wegrzyn, Anna, et al, 2000; 105:S182). Of those school-based reactions, 79 percent occurred within the classroom (*Journal of School Nursing*, Vol. 20, Number 5, page 268).

“Food Allergy Awareness Week is May 11-17 and it is a great opportunity to educate the public and bring to the forefront the importance of this bill,” said UDOH Executive Director Dr. David. Sundwall. “Our mission is to protect the public health, and the emergency injection act is an important tool because of the significant number of school-age students who are at risk of food-induced anaphylactic shock.”

-MORE-

Page 2 - UDOH Supports Life-saving Emergency Injection Legislation

The law requires all public and private Utah primary and secondary schools to:

- Make initial and annual refresher training regarding the storage and emergency use of an epinephrine auto-injector available to any school employee who volunteers to become trained at an approved training program
- permit a student to possess an epinephrine auto-injector or possess and self-administer an epinephrine auto-injector with formal approval from both the child's parent and health care provider.

It also allows anyone 18 years of age or older who successfully completes an approved training program to get a prescription for an epinephrine auto-injector.

“All parents with a child who risks dying from a food allergy will feel better knowing that schools must follow these guidelines,” said Paul Patrick, UDOH EMS Director.

For more information on House Bill 101, Emergency Injection for Anaphylactic Reaction Act, contact Travis Scoresby at (801) 538-9133 or tscoresby@utah.gov. For more information on food allergies or UFAN, visit www.UtahFoodAllergy.org.

#

The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.